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National Economic Outlook and Forecast for Tourism - Brainstorming session

ORANJESTAD -- As tourism is the most important pillar of Aruba's economy, with the majority of visitors coming from the U.S., those working in the field to insure Aruba's stable position as a destination with steady growth are continually examining the political and financial status of their markets, while considering fluctuations in world economy and how they will affect Aruba's economic sustainability.

Minister of Tourism, Transport & Labor, Otmar Oduber, conducted a "brainstorming" session with leaders in the fields of tourism, social affairs and the local business commu-



A gathering of government leaders and various stakeholders



Ministers Otmar Oduber, Mike Eman and Michelle Hooyboer-Winklaar

nity on Wednesday morning, September 7 in the Renaissance Convention Center. The nearly 3-hour session of presentations, Q & A and expert feedback was also attended by Prime Minister Mike Eman and Minister of Social and Economic Affairs and Culture, Michelle Hooyboer-Winklaar.

Island tourism icons such as Rory Arends and Myrna Jansen, both former directors of the Aruba Tourism Authority were present and the CEO of the Aruba Hotel and Tourism Asso-

ciation, AHATA, Jim Hepple. The business community was represented by such respected members as Joyce Bartels-Daal, President of the Aruba Trade and Industry Association, ATIA, President of the Central Bank of Aruba, Jane Semeleer, President of the Board of the Chamber of Commerce Mohamed J. Mahawat Khan, Sheela van der Poole of MAMBO, Gilberto (Juni) Croes, Jr., General Managing Director of CMB Bank, Javier Wolter and Friendsel Giel, Director of the Aruba Invest-

ment Bank, AIB, among others.

After hearing presentations on the current state of Aruba's tourism industry from the Director of the ATA, Ronella Tjin Asjoe-Croes, a forecast from the Aruba Airport Authority, AAA, and the effects of the past few years on the populace from the Department of Social Affairs, a lively discussion followed with suggestions for the Minister and the ATA. A number of them were not new to ATA personal or the minister, who reminded those present they are working within the budget provided by funds from room taxes, so being cost-effective is always a consideration.

AAA confirmed a marked increase in flights from the U.S. beginning in November, despite the loss of long time tourism partner American Airlines flights from New York, as these routes will be picked up by other carriers. 2011 has seen positive growth of 6.7% in the first 8 months, nearly double what was predicted; August, which is a "low season" month, had an increase of 11.7% over August of 2010. These are very encouraging figures for 2011-2012, generally.




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TUESDAY AND FRIDAY: LIVE MUSIC

Student resume protests in Chile



SANTIAGO (AFP) - Thousands of students took to the streets of major Chilean cities Thursday in their ongoing attempt to press the government of President Sebastian Pinera to reform the country's education system.

While past protests have included dancers, drummers and street performers, the latest was more somber, in line with a country in mourning following a September 2 plane crash that killed 21 people in-

cluding top Chilean media personalities.

Students and their supporters marched in the capital as well as cities such as Valdivia, Valparaiso, Puerto Montt and Talca.

In Santiago, where the march was not authorized, riot police used a water cannon to quickly disperse a group of protesting high school students.

The demonstrations were held "to make it clear that we are still present," and that the demands have not been met, said Cristobal Lagos, secretary of the Federation of University of Chile Students

(FECH).

For three months, Chile has seen mass protests calling for the elimination of a voucher system that supports private universities and demanding free, higher quality education at public universities.

Students, workers, environmentalists and gay rights activists are among tens of thousands who have taken to the streets in recent weeks to press demands on issues from building electric dams in Patagonia to improving education.

The students were also set to answer a government invitation for talks. A first meeting on September 3 with the president and top officials was inconclusive.

Pinera, a conservative billionaire whose popularity soared after the spectacular rescue of 33 Chilean miners last October after 69 days trapped underground, is facing growing discontent.

A recent poll gave him only a 26 percent approval rating, making him the least popular Chilean leader since General Augusto Pinochet's 1973-90 dictatorship.

Cuba posts photos to dispel Castro health rumors

HAVANA (AFP) - Cuba posted new photos of Fidel Castro on government-run news websites Thursday, in an apparent effort to quiet rumors that the former president and revolutionary icon was dying or dead.

Images on the cubadebate.cu website appeared to have been taken Tuesday at Castro's Havana home. They showed the former Cuban president, 85, in conversation with Mario Silva, a producer from Venezuelan television.

Silva was quoted as saying that he had come to Havana to work on a report intended to

dispel rumors propagated "by the Venezuelan opposition and the rightwing (Cubans) in Miami that the Cuban leader had died."

"To everyone who was celebrating in the belief that Comandante Fidel had died from a stroke, I regret to inform you that he is alive and better than ever," Silva said.

Castro, hero of the revolution that swept dictator Fulgencio Batista from power in 1959, remains a communist icon, five years after handing over day-to-day governance of the communist island in 2006 to his younger brother Raul, following a medical crisis.

New tropical storm takes aim at Mexico: forecasters

MIAMI (AFP) - A new tropical storm in the Caribbean, the 14th named system of the 2011 season, took aim at Mexico on Thursday and threatened to grow into a hurricane in the next two days, US forecasters said.

Tropical Storm Nate was cycling 130 miles (205 kilometers) west of Campeche, Mexico with maximum sustained winds of 45 miles (75 kilometers) per hour, the Miami-based National Hurricane Center said in its 0600 GMT advisory.

The forecasters issued a warning for the Mexican coast from Chiltepec to Celestun, where tropical storm conditions were expected in the next 12 hours.

In the meantime, it was expected to dump two to four inches (five to 10 centimeters) of rain -- with isolated deluges of up to eight inches -- over the Mexican states of Campeche, Tabasco and southern Veracruz, it said.

The storm is also expected to raise the tide along the coast by up to three feet (one meter).

Another tropical storm, Maria, was meanwhile stirring far out in the Atlantic ocean, some 1,005 miles (1,620 kilometers) east of the Leeward Islands, with sustained winds of up to 50 miles (85 kilometers) per

hour.

The NHC issued a tropical storm watch for the Leeward Islands of Antigua as well as Barbuda, Montserrat, Nevis and St. Kitts, adding that the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico "should monitor the progress of Maria."

It added, however, that "little change in strength is forecast during the next 48 hours."

A greatly weakened Hurricane Katia was meanwhile expected to pass between the US east coast and Bermuda later on Thursday without making landfall, forecasters said.

The NHC on Wednesday downgraded Katia to a category one hurricane but issued a tropical storm watch for Bermuda as the storm neared, packing winds of up to 90 miles (150 kilometers) an hour.

Although the storm was forecast to steer well clear of the US mainland, the NHC warned of continuing high and "life-threatening" ocean swells along the eastern seaboard, Bermuda and east-facing beaches in the Bahamas.

Much of the US east coast is still recovering from last week's Hurricane Irene, which caused widespread evacuations and flooding.

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National Economic Outlook and Forecast for Tourism...

Continued from page 1



Director of ATIA Joyce Bartels-Daal



President of the Central Bank Jane Semeleer

However, Jim Hepple confirmed that despite positive growth over the past two years in arrivals, it must be conceded that REVPAR is still behind 2005 figures. the spending practices of vacationers are down, which is a typical symptom of a weakened economy and the recovery period after a "recession" in the vacation industry. History demonstrates that after such events as the financial crises at the end of 2008, arrivals will again in-

crease following the initial downturn, but the level of spending will still lag far behind.

Though Aruba appreciates the many dedicated visitors from the U.S. vacationing here annually, it is only wise for them to look at the strongly emerging economies of such nations as Brazil, Argentina and Colombia as places to encourage tourism to Aruba and to work for more convenient airlift while forming liaisons

with their tour operators. Rory Arends reminded those present of the proximity of Venezuela and how strong a place it holds as a source for tourists to Aruba, and this nation, despite its political turbulence, should still be an important point of attention in Latin America.

Suggestions for bringing in new markets in other strong economies, such as Russia, were made, and the ATA has explored this in the past, but again, a priority is considering what sort of rewards will result from the money invested, so as to do it most effectively.

A wide range of topics were addressed, including the effect of changes in the labor laws now being discussed in Parliament will have on tourism, which is labor intensive. "We should remember," stated Jim Hepple, "the new ATA... really the whole thrust is on increasing expenditures, rather than just visitor arrival numbers. What we really are trying to do by increasing the spending is increasing the quality of life, not just through the hotel sector, but through the whole community."

On a positive note, Juni Croes reminded the gathering of the difference between "re-



ATA CEO Ronella Tjin Asjoe Croes and Javier Wolter behind



Minister Michelle Hooyboer Winklaar listens as Jim Hepple makes a point

ality and perception." He expressed that for those following the economic news, it is depressing to hear of the trends in the U.S. and many European nations, but their gloomy outlook does not necessarily reflect the state of affairs in Aruba, which is relatively far more stable than many of these nations. Fredsel Giel pointed out more concrete figures of what would be considered "acceptable sustainable growth" should be established, and a

plan as to how to achieve that goal.

The meeting concluded with an expression of gratitude from Prime Minister Eman and Minister Oduber for the attendance and input of those representing the stakeholders in Aruba's tourism product and financial wellbeing. Their suggestions and concerns will be studied and addressed over the coming months.

by Rosalie Klein



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Also, in August Palm Beach Casino held a Mini Baccarat tournament which resulted in a tremendous success. The casino gave away no less than \$15,000 in prizes.

The winners were:

1st prize winner: Ivan Fagundez \$8,000;

2nd prize winner: Jose Luis De Freitas \$3,000;

3rd prize winner: Adriano Delnero \$1500;

4th prize winner: Yacoub Yacoub \$1000;

5th prize winner: Juan Aguera \$750;

6th prize winner: Jose de la Concha \$500; and

7th prize winner: Ramon Poleo \$250.

Congratulations to all.

Photos show one happy patron showing off his winning and patrons enjoying the relaxed ambiance at Palm Beach Casino.

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CLASSIFIEDS

Arubus, Aruba's Public Transport system, has new Director



ORANJESTAD -- On Tuesday morning's press conference called by the Minister of Transport with Arubus under his watch, informed the public that as of October 1st 2011, Mr. Ignacio T. Croes will assume the position of Director of Arubus. This decision was ratified by the Council of Ministers. It is remarkable to note that this is the very first time since the founding of Arubus that they conducted an open solicitation for the position of Director. Mr. Croes will be the 5th Director of Arubus and the first who was not appointed politically.

To ensure the most transparent process possible, the company contracted the services of an external concern to be part of a selection commission. This commission elected the candidate they considered to be most qualified for the position of Director of our public transport company.

There were nine applicants and after a careful and extensive analysis they concluded unanimously that Mr. Ignacio Croes was the candidate most qualified for the position of Director of Arubus.

Since 2009 Mr. Croes has been a member of the Supervisory Board of Arubus. Now that he has been appointed Director, he is expected to step down from the supervi-

sory Board and assume the challenging role of Director of our Public Transport company. He will be charged with the difficult task of executing the report for turning around the dreadful financial situation of the company.

Croes assumes the position with a vast array of experience amassed over more than 20 years in sales management, marketing, and business operations on both the regional and corporate levels for different types of companies.

He has served as Station/Commercial Manager for Aserca Airlines and Santa Barbara Airlines. He was Commercial Director for Aires Aruba, Export Manager at Brouwerij Nacional Balashi and Tropical Bottling Company, Sales and Airport Manager for Martin Air Holland and Director Corporate Services for Air Aruba, among others.

Minister of Transport, Otmar Oduber, expressed his satisfaction with the choice of Mr. Ignacio Croes for the position of Director for Arubus. The Minister indicated that... "I am sure that we have someone who will continue the good work that the outgoing director began and who will take the company to the level of being a solid one in keeping with the plans we have mapped out for it."



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Work on Balashi bridge to be completed second week of October



ORANJESTAD – The Department of Public Works – DOW – announces work on the old Balashi bridge is on time without setbacks. Repairs began in August with the replacement of pipes that enable water to flow underneath the bridge.

The project was carefully planned by DOW and according to project coordinator, Jossy Kock, when completed there will be no change in the bridge structure, but islanders will see the difference in the

water flow. The last maintenance work performed on those pipes was in the late 1950's, beginning 1960.

In the beginning, the utility company experienced a little setback with the pulling of the electricity cables, but now they finished and rest of the maintenance work is going smoothly.

When DOW employees opened the middle part of the bridge, they noticed that among 12 pipes installed for

the water flow, only 2 were in decent condition with the other 10 quite clogged. This caused water flow to be at a minimum level, which accounted for the foul smell and still water alongside the bridge.

According to Mr. Kock, the bridge will be ready for re-opening in the second week of October. "Islanders will notice more wild- and marine life around the bridge due to the increased water flow," he concluded.

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Sci-Tech

Room for nuclear energy in the future: new IEA chief



(AFP) -- The new chief of the International Energy Agency Maria van der Hoeven this week said nuclear power will have a place in the future despite the Fukushima catastrophe and the decision by some countries to opt out.

Van der Hoeven, formerly the Dutch minister for economic affairs, said she would be looking to countries to explain how they plan to cover their energy needs.

"If you would like to abandon nuclear, then my question is: 'How are you going to meet the growing demand of energy when you are abandoning one of your sources?'," she said in an interview with AFP.

"That question has to be answered by all those coun-

tries and governments who would like to abandon nuclear."

She added: "If the answer is 'we'll do it with renewables', then my question will be 'how'?"

"How cost effective are renewables? How much are they deployed at this moment? How are you going to speed up the curve of renewables so that they're going to be a greater part of the energy supply?"

Van der Hoeven took up the post of IEA executive director on September 1, succeeding Japan's Nobuo Tanaka.

The country is still coming to terms with the massive March 11 earthquake and tsunami which knocked out

cooling systems at the Fukushima Daiichi plant, causing reactors to overheat and radiation to leak.

Germany switched off several of its reactors in the wake of the disaster and has since passed legislation to phase out nuclear energy by 2022.

A recent vote against Italian premier Silvio Berlusconi's plans to resume the country's nuclear programme was also seen as a reflection of popular unease about atomic energy in Europe after Fukushima.

The Swiss government in May, too, recommended that nuclear plants be phased out.

Van der Hoeven said: "There will be room for nuclear energy in the future."

"I think if we really want to go -- and we do -- towards a future where we have less CO2 emissions, there are only two real things to get there, and it has to do with nuclear because it doesn't produce CO2 and it has to do with renewables."

"And in the meantime there is gas. So these are the three things we are talking about."

The Paris-based IEA is the energy branch of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Global warming brings crab threat to Antarctica



ANTARTICA (AFP) -- The sea floor around the West Antarctica peninsula could become invaded by a voracious king crab, which is on the march thanks to global warming, biologists reported on Wednesday.

The worrisome intruder is a bright-red deep-sea predator that previously had been spotted only in the Ross Sea, on the other side of West Antarctica.

Taxonomists identified the crustacean just five years ago, bestowing it with the lengthy monicker of Neolithodes yaldwyni Ahoyng and

Dawson and placing it among the 121 species of king crab.

It is known as an "ecosystem engineer" because it digs into the sea floor to feast on worms and other tiny animals, an activity that in large numbers can have repercussions across the marine food web.

A team led by Laura Grange of the University of Hawaii at Manoa lowered a remote-controlled scoutcraft as part of a long-term probe into biodiversity in the waters off the Antarctic peninsula.

They looked at Palmer Deep, a mud-floored basin in

the Weddell Sea located 120 kilometres (75 miles) from the edge of the continental shelf.

The robot's camera, trailed over two kilometres (1.2 miles), spotted 42 crabs, all of them at depths lower than 850 metres (2,760 feet), where the water was a relatively balmy 1.4 degrees Celsius (34.5 degrees Fahrenheit).

By extrapolation, the crab population in Palmer's deep -- an area measuring 14 kms (nine miles) long by eight kms (five miles) wide -- could be more than 1.5 million, says Grange.

That density is the same as commercial crab fisheries in Alaska and the British South Atlantic island of South Georgia.

The images gave a glimpse of the kind of damage caused by the foraging crustaceans.

The crabs, their shells measuring roughly 10 centimetres (four inches) across, had dug gashes up to 20 cms (one foot) into the soft ocean

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Half of world's PCs 'use pirated software'



single licence for multiple installations or downloading programs from peer-to-peer networks, BSA said.

The survey of 15,000 PC users in 32 countries showed Chinese users have the most relaxed attitude to piracy.

As many as 86 percent of computer users in the country acquire their software illegally

most or all of the time, the survey showed.

"The survey makes it clear that the global software piracy epidemic is spreading fastest in China, which is now the world's biggest market for new PCs," said BSA president and chief executive Robert Holleyman.

The Washington-based BSA is an industry group that works for copyright protection and counts among its members some of the world's biggest technology companies, including Apple, Microsoft, Symantec and Adobe.

Pirated software installations cost the industry nearly \$59 billion globally last year, a BSA report said in May.

It said in terms of value, China was the world's second-largest culprit behind the US, installing \$7.78 billion of stolen programs last year.

The commercial value of pirate computer software used in the US was estimated at \$9.5 billion, the BSA said in the May report.

(AFP) -- Almost half of personal computer users around the world get their software illegally, with China's massive market the worst culprit, a report claimed on Wednesday.

A Business Software Alliance (BSA) survey showed 47 percent of PC users globally believe there is nothing wrong with using unauthorised copies of software programs.

This includes buying a

floor and thrown up lumps of sediment. The robot also retrieved a pregnant female crab, as proof that the species was reproducing.

The implication is that as global warming heats the frigid coastal-shelf waters, which lie at depths of 400 and 600 metres (1,300 and 1,950 feet), the way will be open for the crustacean to continue its creeping advance.

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Health & Living

US court blocks challenge to Obama healthcare law



WASHINGTON (AFP) - A US appeals court gave a judicial victory to President Barack Obama's health care reform law Thursday, rejecting challenges that the mandate to purchase insurance is unconstitutional.

A three-judge panel of the 4th US Circuit Court of Appeals, based in Richmond, Virginia, ruled that lawsuits filed by Virginia Attorney General Kenneth Cuccinelli

and Liberty University did not have enough sufficient merit and were dismissed.

The ruling is the first major judicial success of the Obama administration on the law enacted last year, particularly its controversial "individual mandate," which requires everyone to own health insurance in America's mostly private system or pay a penalty.

Republicans strongly oppose the law, which they have dubbed "Obamacare," as an infringement on individual liberty, and have sworn to repeal it.

Commenting on the decision, Liberty University president Mathew Staver told AFP that the school would continue to fight for the law's repeal.

"Our next step is to ask the

Supreme Court to review this case. We are going to challenge the court ruling in the Supreme Court," Staver said.

Most US legal analysts agree that the reform's fate will ultimately be decided by the US Supreme Court, perhaps as early as next year, but the complaints against the law's constitutionality have yet to reach the highest court in the land.

Last month the Eleventh Circuit appeals court, based in Atlanta, ruled Friday that the law's individual mandate exceeded Congress's powers.

But the court ruled that the remainder of the health care law, which extended coverage to an extra 32 million people and was a long-held dream of Democrats, was within the bounds of the Constitution.

Health Tip: Enjoying Tummy Time

While an infant should always sleep on his or her back, tummy time is recommended when the baby is awake and being observed, to help baby develop strong muscles.

The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests how to make tummy time more enjoyable for your little one:

- Set a toy on the floor just beyond baby's reach to encourage reaching for it.
- Surround baby with toys to encourage moving different muscles in different directions.
- Lie on the floor and put baby on your chest. Baby should struggle to lift his or her head to better see your face.
- As you or a caregiver look on, let another young child get down on the floor with baby during tummy time, as it can be fun for both children.



-A man too busy to take care of his health is like a mechanic too busy to take care of his tools.

-Spanish Proverb

Beauty Tips for Women



Skin Care is the secret to beautiful skin. Healthy skin is a gift to mankind too. At times you can go to any reputed parlors for different kind of skin treatments. But parlors are not always the secret to skin care. You need to have a healthy diet, minimize stress, and clean your skin regularly to have a healthy skin. So, skin care becomes a vital part of your life. Also remember to exercise regularly.

Tip:1. **Cleansing:** It is very important to clean your skin regularly.

Tip:2. **Exfoliating:** The other name of exfoliating is known as scrubbing.

Tip:3 **Moisturizing:** After you finish removing the dead skin and extra oil from your skin, you will need to moisturize your skin.

Tip:4 **Sunscreen:** It is very important to apply sunscreen lotion.

Tip:5 **Importance of Water:** Intake of sufficient amount of water is very important.

Tip:6. **Sleep is important:** You must take 7 to 8 hours of sleep regularly.

Tip:7. **Say No to Few Things:** Too much of alcohol - tobacco and fat spoils the skin. Reduce or completely stop consumption of alcohol and tobacco and too much fat.

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Coming Up: The 5th anniversary Caribbean Sea Jazz Festival



CSJF founder Eric Eman and Mandy Lopez of the ATA

Purple Entertainment has announced the exciting line up for the first lustrum of the Caribbean Sea Jazz Festival, schedule for Columbus Day weekend, October 7 & 8. CSJF found Erik Eman was introduced by long time host of the event, Patrick Melchior, at the Cas di Cultura, the hub of the CSJF, for the announcement of their headliners. He was joined by official sponsors, Aruba Tourism Authority and Balashi Brewery, along with Cas di Cultura Director Jonathan Vieira.

The CSJF will feature some world class jazz and R & B performers from the U.S. and Europe, along with extremely talented local performers for two nights of great music, food, art and ambiente. THE MORNING NEWS starts our series of artist profiles for this exciting event with Angie Stone, who will be performing on the main outdoor stage on Friday evening, October 7, from 9:30 to 10:30 PM.

Born in Columbia, South Carolina, Angie began singing gospel music at First Nazareth

Baptist Church. She has a daughter, Diamond from her marriage to Rodney Stone (also known as Lil' Rodney C!, from the hip hop group Funky Four Plus One). Diamond contributed background vocals to



Patrick Melchior, Nathalie of Balashi and Jonathan Vieira

her 2007 song "Baby" and gave birth to Angie's grandson in 2008. During the 1990s Stone dated neo-soul singer D'Angelo and their son Michael was born in 1998. Stone lives in Atlanta, Georgia with her son and fiancé

Ashanti.

In the early 1980's, performing as Angie B, she was a member of The Sequence, a female hip hop/funk trio. They were the second rap group signed to the Sugar Hill Record Label and had a hit in 1980 with "Funk You Up", which reached number fifteen on the U.S. Top Black Singles chart. The Sequence enjoyed a series of rap hits as the first female rap group during the early years of Hip Hop. Such hits as "Funky Sound (Tear the Roof Off)" kept The Sequence touring with many of the Soul Bands of the day.

Angie then worked with Mantronix, before singing background on Lenny Kravitz's fifth studio album, "5". The Sequence broke up, but she emerged during the 1990's as part of the R&B trio

Vertical Hold which released the popular single "Seems You're Much Too Busy" as well as two albums: A Matter of Time (1993) and Head First (1995). In 1996, she teamed up with Gerry DeVeaux and with Charlie Mole to form Devox.



Angie Stone

They recorded one album; "Devox Featuring Angie B. Stone." Angie shared song-writing credits on D'Angelo's first two studio albums, Brown Sugar (1995) and Voodoo (2000), as well as providing backing vocals on tour.

Her solo debut album, Black Diamond, was released on September 28, 1999 on Arista Records and certified gold by the RIAA. In 2001, she released Mahogany Soul on Clive Davis' J Records, which also went gold and Stone Love in 2004. Much of her solo material has significant soul influences. It is her voice you hear singing the theme song for the UPN/CW's sitcom "Girlfriends."

In 2007 came The Art of Love & War with the lead single is "Baby" featuring Betty Wright. Its music video boasts cameo appearances by comedian Mike Epps and America's Next Top Model Eva Pigford. The song was nominated for Best R&B Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocals at

the 2008 Grammy Awards. Her 5th album, Unexpected, was released in the UK in 2010. Angie explains of this last album: "Being as I've delivered four decent albums already, I felt it was safe to switch up and do something different this time. And musically overall I just wanted to have FUN! I wanted to do something that embodied a jam kinda feel, so that we could have some fun in concert and show people everything doesn't always have to be so serious."

Angie Stone will be having fun with audiences at the CSJF 2011. Tickets can be purchased online via www.caribbeanseafoundation.com or at Plaza Bookshop, Cliffix, Superfood, MooMba Beach, Cas di Cultura or at CD's & More in Cumana.

Tomorrow: a profile of nine-time Grammy winning pianist Eddie Palmieri.

by Rosalie Klein



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Lea Salonga named a Miss Universe 2011 judge



Lea Salonga

Lea Salonga, perhaps the most admired Filipino globally along with Manny Pacquiao, will be one of the seven judges in the Miss Universe 2011 pageant night in Sao Paulo, Brazil, according to the pageant organizers.

The pageant will be held on September 12.

"São Paulo, here I come!!!!!" Salonga tweeted a

few hours after the tycoon and main organizer Donald Trump and Paula M. Shugart, president of the Miss Universe Organization, announced the composition of the judges' roster yesterday.

The other judges are three-time Indianapolis 500 champion Helios Castroneves, American broadcast legend Connie Chung, Brazilian Supermodel Isabeli

Fontana, actress/television producer Vivica Fox, Adrienne Maloof of the hit series *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*, and Miss Universe 2003 Amelia Vega.

Salonga won a Tony Award in 1991 for her lead performance in the Broadway musical *Miss Saigon*. She joined the ranks of the Disney Legends at ceremonies in Anaheim, California on August 19. She was honored for being the singing voice of the female lead characters in three Disney films, *Aladdin*, *Mulan* and *Mulan II*. Salonga was also cited for her achievements in the-



Connie Chung

atre and music since age 7.

In October 2010, Salonga was appointed Goodwill Ambassador of the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization.

The 60th Annual Miss Universe Pageant will be broadcast live from Cridcard Hall in São



Helios Castroneves



Adrienne Maloof

Paulo and will have a live Spanish simulcast that will air on the Telemundo Network. The Miss Universe Organization is a Donald J.

Trump and NBC Universal joint venture.

For the first time in the pageant's history, candidates' supporters 16 years of age or older "may vote online up to 10 times per e-mail address per day." Online voting began last August 19 and will end on September 11 at www.nbc.com and www.missuniverse.com.

"After you click the 'vote' button, rank the contestants 1-10, 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest. Producer will then take the average of the total votes from the IP addresses originating from each country, and each country vote will count as 1," the pageant's online voting rules state.

The pageant's producer will tabulate the online votes and "take the average of the total votes from the IP addresses originating from each country. Each country vote will then count as 1 vote, and be averaged with all of the other country votes to give the contestant a final score."

The winner of the online voting will gain



Amelia Vega

an automatic spot into the semifinals of the pageant.

year's Miss Universe pageant will be hosted by American TV executive Andrew Cohen and news anchor Natalie Morales



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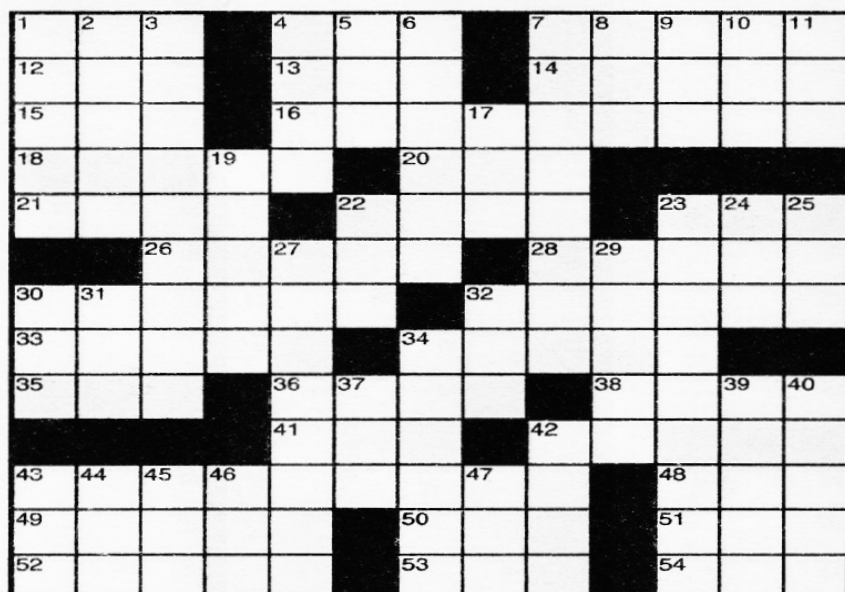
ON THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW

ACROSS

1. Viper
4. Mrs. North of mysteries
7. ___ de menthe
12. Sch. auxiliary
13. Countdown ending
14. ___ race
15. Lapse
16. At stake
18. Eighth letter
20. "SpongeBob" voice Kenny
21. Moon
22. Guilty or not guilty
23. Footlike part
26. School, in Paris
28. Abolitionist
30. Goof
32. Spirited get-together?
33. Barracks poster, perhaps
34. Pertaining to a Hindi region
35. Had a little lamb
36. Actor Alain
38. Latched
41. Suffix for stew or cow
42. "Alters" a stallion
43. Long-distance device
48. "B.C." queen of the ants
49. "The Wreck of the Mary ___"
50. Maxwell House

DOWN

1. Almost vertical
2. Minute channel
3. Loyalist's credo
4. Disdainful cry
5. Blyth or Sheridan
6. Spirit
7. Reduced to ashes
8. Cath., e.g.
9. Peyton Manning's
10. Fellow
11. Feature of a needle
17. Weed digger
19. South American aquatic rodent
22. Bleary-eyed coffee swiller's lack
23. Joke finale
24. And so on: abbr.
25. "___ Loves You"
27. Bake sale standbys
29. Increase the bet
30. Health farm
31. Intoxicated
32. Ship's timber
34. Charge formally
37. Internet address
39. Cow spout
40. Russian despots
42. Rayburn of "Match Game" fame
43. Gridiron scores: abbr.
44. Classic car
45. Egypt, once: abbr.
46. Org. once headed by Charlton Heston
47. Highlands negative

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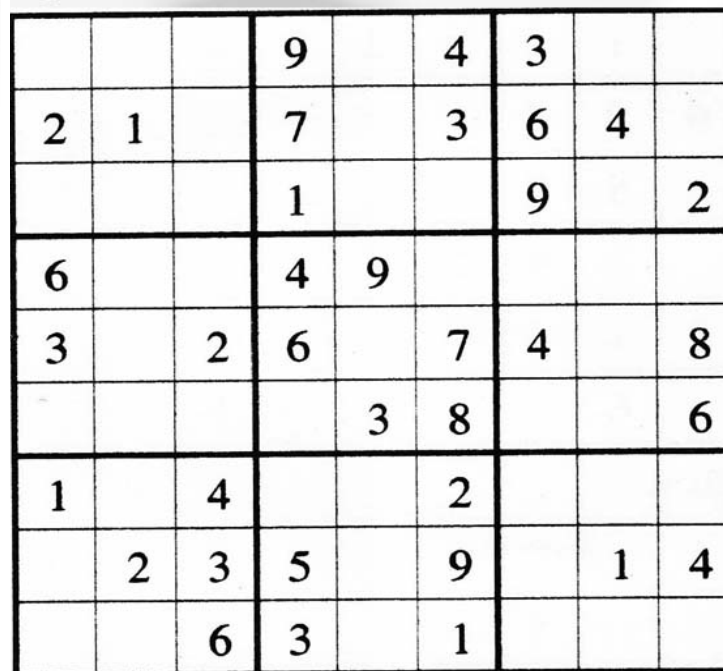
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9	5	4	2	3	8	7	6	1
3	8	6	5	1	9	2	7	4
7	4	9	3	8	6	5	1	2
1	2	5	6	7	3	4	9	8
8	3	2	4	1	7	9	5	6
5	6	1	9	8	2	3	7	4
4	9	7	8	6	3	1	2	5

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9. A number is Never repeated in a row or column. In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9.

Finance

US stocks end in red ahead of Obama speech



NEW YORK (AFP) - US stocks were stuck in negative territory Thursday as traders awaited a key speech by President Barack Obama to Congress on stimulating the economy and job growth.

After snapping a three-session slide Wednesday with a triple-digit gain, the Dow Jones Industrial Average tum-

bled 118.90 points, or 1.04 percent, to 11,295.96.

The broader S&P 500 fell 12.72 points (1.06 percent) to 1,185.90, while the tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite slid 19.80 points (0.78 percent) to 2,529.14.

"Obama is expected to discuss a plan to stimulate job growth, but many expect that plan components, including tax cuts, will encounter opposition in Congress," Briefing.com analysts said in a client note.

"That said, many believe that the plan may already be discounted by the market."

Obama is set to address a rare joint session of Congress at 7:00 pm (2300 GMT).

Oil prices fall ahead of Obama speech

NEW YORK (AFP) - World oil prices slumped on Thursday as traders worried about poor US economic data before a key speech on job creation by President Barack Obama.

New York's main contract, West Texas Intermediate (WTI) light sweet crude for delivery in October, fell 29 cents to close at \$89.05 a barrel.

In London, Brent North Sea crude for delivery in October dropped \$1.25 to settle at \$114.55 a barrel on the IntercontinentalExchange.

Obama was scheduled to speak before Congress at 2300 GMT, amid media reports that he would propose a package of employment-boosting measures with a price tag of between \$300 bil-

lion and \$400 billion.

Underscoring the challenges facing the US economy, the Labor Department said Thursday that new claims for jobless benefits were 414,000 last week, little changed from the previous week and reflective of high unemployment.

The United States is the world's largest consumer of oil, and traders keep a close eye on the health of the US economy to gauge future trends in global energy demand.

US crude oil inventories fell by four million barrels last week, according to data published on Thursday by the Department of Energy.

However, the drawdown was not caused by strong demand from US consumers, analysts said, attributing it instead to a temporary disruption of oil production in the Gulf of Mexico caused by Tropical Storm Lee.

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Fed prepared to act to boost growth: Bernanke

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The Federal Reserve is ready to take new action to speed up the economy, Fed chief Ben Bernanke said Thursday, but warned that government budget-cutting could hold back growth.

Bernanke gave no indication of just what the central bank could do to stimulate the sluggish economy. Many analysts say that it could at least adjust its purchases of government bonds to push down long-term interest rates rather than focus on short term rates as in the past two years.

Bernanke also said that after a first-half pace of less than one percent the economy is poised to pick up speed in the second half, with little danger of inflation.

But he added that growth remains under threat, particularly from spending cuts by government authorities at all

levels.

Bernanke did not repeat his caveat of August 26, when he told a central bank symposium in Jackson Hole, Wyoming that "most of the economic policies that support robust economic growth in the long run are outside the province of the central bank."

But he did stress that government policy to reverse the weakness in the housing sector, and to generate jobs, was crucial for charging up growth.

Bernanke spoke just hours before President Barack Obama is slated to announce a \$300 billion job creation effort in a major speech before Congress.


With some 14 million Americans officially unemployed, and millions more having dropped out of the work force, Obama aims to reset the government agenda after a bruising battle with Republicans who have forced sweeping spending cuts on the White House.

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Popular Pizza Bob's is perfect for casual dining



A popular hangout with Eagle Beach temporary residents



Swedish sisters Sharla and Carolina are huge fans of Pizza Bob's

Everyone has those nights when they want an easy, casual meal, and among denizens of the Eagle Beach area, their favorite place for fun food and friendly surroundings is Pizza Bob's, right next to the Bucuti Beach resort parking lot.

Maitre D' Alex adores welcoming his abundant repeat clientele, being five minutes walk from most of Aruba's timeshares has made the place a prime eatery among families with healthy appetites. Their pizza is modeled on the classic thin crust typical of Chicago's Southside, and the secret recipe of a famous pizzeria since 1957, which we dare not name as we might get whacked!

While checking out the locale, Alex introduced us to Sharla and Carolina from Sweden, frequent visitors to Aruba who can't imagine a vacation without several dinner stops at Pizza Bob's. This was the general consensus of all the guests who we spoke with during our time there; all make it a multiple meal choice during their vacation. "I have one couple from Germany who eat here every night of their vacation," confessed Alex, "they are

like family to us!"

Aside from the famous pizzas, the menu features very tasty barbecue, a personal favorite of Caroline, lasagna, Fresh Vegetable Linguini and huge salads that can be shared by two, plus a personal favorite for dessert, "Death by Chocolate." They do sport an air-conditioned dining room, which is popular at lunch time to escape the tropical mid-day sun, but nighttime is the right time to enjoy their outdoor terrace and great music from noted island singer Tommy every Wednesday and Saturday night, which converts the eatery into a congenial hangout until closing time.

If you love your pizza and island ambiance, Pizza Bob's is the perfect place for a fun night. Open for lunch and dinner every day from 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., and they deliver to all the resorts in the Eagle Beach area. Call 588 9040 ext. 790 for delivery or to pre-order. They also feature a daily happy hour from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. when you can enjoy a large size pizza for the price of a medium and drinks are 2-for-1; what a deal!

Gold Coast Aruba: This is the time to invest

Managers of Gold Coast Aruba, the island's newest and most innovative gated community, report that sales are picking up nicely as the global economy begins to recover and those with a bit of disposal income are looking to invest in a sure thing. Gold Coast Directing Manager Fito Croes has noticed a surprising percentage of owners are barely using the villas or town homes they purchase, but taking advantage of Gold Coast's rental services to turn their investment into ready income.

"The greater portion of home owners are using their 'home away from home' in Aruba to escape the winter months, or spend holidays with the family on the island," he remarked, "but I am gratified by how many are buying because they felt secure with real estate investment on Aruba. They really study the history and economy of the island and are impressed with



town homes, villas and condominiums with a stunning clubhouse complemented by two additional pools decks, one of which has been open for a year, the other will be ready for the holidays 2010. They expect the clubhouse to be ready for the community with a workout room and spectacular facilities by the end of 2011. It will also house a restaurant and mini-market.

Owners who purchased upon the groundbreaking only

available. Partnering with two of Aruba's top providers of kitchens and bathrooms enables developers to offer custom options for clients, so buyers can individualize their homes. An elegant and chic standard package is available, or island designers will assist owners in finishing the décor to their specific tastes.

There are many aspects to purchasing property; not the least is the future value of the investment. To further enhance this, Gold Coast managers have inaugurated a number of in-house services and are now negotiating with Interval International to provide a huge international pool for investors to tap for renters either short or long term. Property exchange for a vacation in another destination will also be available. Gold Coast's own rental services have also proven highly successful in assisting owners in renting their villas; 24-hour security and maintenance services also tip the scales when it is time to make a decision. Aside from all this, housekeeping, babysitting and catering services are also available for community members as well as airport pick-up and drop-off and pre-shopping services so cupboards and refrigerators are stocked upon arrival, which can all be arranged through their home management department.



the political stability and continually increasing value of prime locations. Gold Coast is in the heart of Malmok, considered Aruba's most exclusive community; in this area, the value of properties has only increased over time. It is minutes to the best beaches and all the action, and yet offers a quiet and secluded getaway; we are very pleased by the response to our concept."

Fito, with his sister Mayrin and brother Rudy run Cas Bon, which has been constructing homes and building developments for all budgets for nearly twenty years. "Gold Coast Aruba is the jewel in our crown," observes Fito. "We were very excited about this project; the scope and amenities. We talked to countless island visitors to find out what they would really want in a permanent residence on Aruba, and took from there."

Input from frequent vacationers who dreamed of their own home in Aruba will eventually be a community of 260

a few short years ago, are already enjoying a nearly 50% appreciation on their investment, particularly those taking advantage of the management association's rental service. There is always a great demand for Aruba and facilities such as those at Gold Coast, making it easy for some owners to earn their mortgage payments or others to see an immediate return on their in-



vestment.

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Jury selection begins for Jackson doctor trial



LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Jury selection began Thursday to choose the panel that will decide the fate of Michael Jackson's doctor, accused of manslaughter over the pop icon's shock 2009 death at the age of 50.

Conrad Murray was present at the Los Angeles Superior Court but avoided waiting photographers by entering the building via a back entrance, an AFP journalist on the scene said.

"They opened court... the judge gave a brief explanation, then they went down to the jury assembly room," a court spokeswoman told AFP, adding: "Conrad Murray was in attendance today."

Some 160 potential jurors will be questioned initially to determine if they are fit and able to serve in the trial on Conrad Murray, provisionally scheduled to start on September 27.

Those who pass the first stage of vetting will be asked to fill in an extensive questionnaire to weed out those susceptible to bias over the high-profile case.

Outside the court there were only two demonstrators: one in favor of Murray, one against. In the past large numbers of demonstrators have turned up for pre-trial hear-

ings, and may be expected when the trial actually starts.

"Justice For Michael Jackson," read the anti-Murray placard, while the other declared: "I support Dr. Conrad Murray. An Innocent Man Who Must Be Exonerated!!"

The trial was originally to start in May and a three-day jury selection process occurred then, but those chosen were dismissed after the judge delayed the case to give Murray's lawyers more time to prepare their case.

Murray, the last doctor to treat Jackson, is on trial for involuntary homicide in Jackson's death on June 25, 2009 after an overdose of the powerful anesthetic propofol, which the singer used as a sleeping aid.

Jackson's death, on the eve of a planned series of comeback concerts in London aimed at reviving his reputation and finances battered by child sex allegations, stunned fans around the world.

His personal doctor is charged with administering propofol -- usually used as an anesthetic -- to the star and then neglecting to monitor him closely enough.

Murray's defense team is expected to argue that Jackson gave himself an excessive dose of the drug while the doctor was out of the room at the singer's mansion in the affluent Holmby Hills neighborhood west of Los Angeles.

Opening statements are tentatively set to begin September 27, and the trial -- which will be televised -- is expected to last up to six weeks.

In the run-up to the trial, the judge has dealt with a number of requests: in August he barred defense attorneys for Murray from calling Jackson's former physicians as



witnesses.

He also refused to sequester the jury despite a case the defense says could be "the most publicized in history" -- comparable to the mid-1990s O.J. Simpson trial, in which jurors were sequestered to guard against outside influence.

The trial will start as plans continue for a tribute concert to the late singer, scheduled for October 8 in Wales but clouded by infighting between members of Jackson's family.

When the star's mother Katherine Jackson and her children made public their plans for the tribute concert in late July, Randy and Jermaine issued a sharp rebuke, blasting the timing of event.

"There will come a time and place for an amazing and deserving tribute to Michael. But we feel that the most important tribute we can give to our brother at this time is to seek justice in his name," the pair said on Twitter in July.

Reese Witherspoon hit by car while jogging

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Oscar-winning actress Reese Witherspoon suffered minor injuries after being hit by a car while out jogging Wednesday, police and a spokeswoman said.

The 35-year-old was struck by a vehicle driven by an 84-year-old local woman while running in the seafront district of Santa Monica west of Los Angeles, a police spokesman said.

Witherspoon was on an unmarked crosswalk at the time, and the driver -- who was traveling at 32 kmh (20 mph) -- was cited for failing

to yield to a pedestrian, said the spokesman.

The actress was taken to hospital, but was discharged and went home later to recover, her publicist said. "She was hit by a car today in Santa Monica while out for a run," said the spokeswoman.

Witherspoon "was not seriously injured and is resting comfortably at home," she added.

The actress, who won her Oscar in 2006 for her role in "Walk the Line", married for a second time in March this year, wedding her agent Jim Toth.

Montreal Symphony reaches pay deal with musicians

MONTREAL (AFP) - The Montreal Symphony Orchestra's management yesterday reached a new deal with musicians after a months-long dispute over salary and work conditions, on the eve of the opening of its new concert hall.

The two sides had been at odds for months over pay and workload, but spent the last week in intense talks to reach an agreement before the inauguration of the custom-built 1,900-seat symphony hall, the orchestra's new home.


"Both management and the union agreed to compromises and demonstrated the openness needed to reach an understanding," the head of the


orchestra's board, former Quebec prime minister Lucien Bouchard, said in a statement.

The new collective bargaining agreement -- which runs through 2014 -- calls for pay rises of 10.5 percent over the four years from 2010 through 2014, management said.


Workers were busy putting the final touches on the concert hall, the centerpiece of Montreal's new arts and entertainment district.

The Montreal Symphony Orchestra, one of North America's best led by conductor Kent Nagano, was to open its new season this week with works by three local composers, followed by Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.



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No more Mr Nice Guy as Pacquiao girds for battle



LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Manny Pacquiao says he is through making friends with opponents in the build up to his championship bouts and vows to take a hard-line approach in his next fight against Juan Manuel Marquez.

The 32-year-old Filipino boxing champion has decisively won his last three fights but failed to score knockouts over Shane Mosley, Antonio Margarito and Joshua Clottey.

"If my opponent is nice and friendly to me then that carries over into the fight," Pacquiao said Wednesday. "Then I am not eager to finish the fight."

The Filipino southpaw has vowed not to go easy when he puts his World Boxing Organization welterweight title on the line against Mexico's Marquez on November 12 in Las Vegas.

"Before Marquez was saying bad things about me. Now he is saying good things about me," said Pacquiao (53-3, 2 draws, 38 KOs).

In a sport that thrives on hype to sell tickets, stare-downs and angry exchanges are usually common when two fighters get together to promote the fight. But that's not been the case with nice-guy Pacquiao.

Mosley and Clottey were

able to disarm Pacquiao with plenty of compliments and talk of how grateful they were the champion was giving them an opportunity to fight for a title, not to mention millions of dollars.

Margarito mocked and insulted Pacquiao's trainer Freddie Roach but stayed away from firing verbal jabs aimed specifically at Pacquiao.

The 144-pound bout will mark the third time Pacquiao and Marquez have tangled. Both previous fights were close with just one round separating the two. The judges' scored the first bout a draw and Pacquiao was awarded a split decision in the rematch. Marquez insists he won both fights.

"I am thinking how can I shut this guy's mouth," Pacquiao said at a news conference at the Beverly Hills Hotel.

One boxer "Pacman" Pacquiao says he would have no trouble getting motivated to knock out is undefeated American Floyd Mayweather.

"If that fight happens it would be a fight like there is no tomorrow," Pacquiao said with a wink.

Previous fight talks between the two broke down over how drug testing would be conducted. Mayweather

angered Pacquiao by accusing him of taking performance-enhancing drugs.

"I haven't taken any drugs in boxing," Pacquiao said Wednesday. "I don't even know what he (Mayweather) is talking about. I don't know what testosterone is. I don't have any idea what he is talking about. He doesn't want to fight."

The Marquez bout will be a change from Pacquiao's previous fights where he moved up in weight class to fight bigger, stronger boxers. Pacquiao says this time he will be in his comfort zone and isn't afraid of getting hit by a smaller fighter.

"For this fight I don't have to worry about weight and size," Pacquiao said. "I won't have to worry so much about the punches that I am taking in the ring because bigger guys punch harder."

Marquez is no shrinking violet. He captured his first world title in 2003 and has won belts in three different weight classes. He has recorded victories over Marco Antonio Barrera and Joel Casamayor but lost a 12-round decision to Mayweather in September 2009 in Las Vegas.

"This is the biggest fight for me because Pacquiao is the best pound-for-pound fighter," Marquez said. "Clottey didn't want to fight and Mosley was the same. But if Pacquiao wants to fight I will give him a fight."

Pacquiao and Marquez have been on a whirlwind tour across the ocean to promote the fight. They were in New York on Tuesday and the Philippines before that where 100,000 people came out to cheer Filipino congressman Pacquiao.

The tour finishes in Mexico City Thursday where thousands of Marquez fans will get a chance to see their hero.

"The Philippines, New York and now here. I don't even know what time it is," said Marquez (53-5, 1 draw, 39 KOs).

Marquez is another in a long line of current and former Mexican champions Pacquiao has defeated in recent years. Pacquiao said he doesn't have a scorched-earth policy against Mexican fighters but is just trying to find the best opponents out there.

"I am just doing my job in the ring. It is not my intention to fight all the Mexican fighters."



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Bopara aims to pile on the pain for India



LONDON (AFP) - England batsman Ravi Bopara has set his sights on piling on the agony for India in a bid to cement his spot in Alastair Cook's one-day team.

Although Bopara has 61 one-day international caps, his inconsistent form means he has never been able to nail down a place in England's squad and the last three matches of the limited overs series against the beleaguered Indians offers a golden opportunity to do just that.

Bopara has only scored five half-centuries for England, with an average of just

over 28, yet an injury to Eoin Morgan and Kevin Pietersen's rest period means the Essex star is still firmly in captain Cook's plans.

Morgan took Bopara's place in the Test team against Sri Lanka earlier this year, but he is out of the rest of the one-day series and the 26-year-old knows he must take advantage, starting in the third match at The Oval on Friday.

Bopara, who made 24 in a 60-run stand with Cook to help England win the second one-dayer on Tuesday, said: "I was a bit surprised Eoin was not fit, but nevertheless I was told early enough and was given time to prepare."

"I've not been told I will definitely play the rest of the series, but obviously I'd like to play and fight for that spot."

"It's a great chance to make it into the first XI and then perform and cement a place in the side."

India's prowess in one-day matches has been unquestioned in recent years, but the draining effects of a miserable tour to England have left them vulnerable even in the short form of the game.

A host of injuries has decimated the squad, with Sachin Tendulkar the eighth Indian to be ruled out of the series after the batsman suffered a toe problem before the second game.

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Serena into US Open semi-finals



NEW YORK (AFP) - Three-time champion Serena Williams shrugged off a slow start to book a US Open semi-final berth with a 7-5, 6-1 victory over Russian Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova on Thursday.

Williams, a 13-time Grand Slam champion who is seeded just 28th after a lengthy injury and illness absence saw her ranking slide, has reached the final four without dropping a set.

She looked a little shaky to start, but she found her groove against her 20-year-old opponent and once she'd broken in the final game to take the opening set the 29-year-old American was in complete control.

The two players had briefly taken the court on Wednesday night, but they

never got beyond their warm-up before drizzly rain prompted officials to cancel the night session as weather prevented completion of any matches for the second straight day.

Williams said her days of enforced indoor practice may have contributed to her erratic start.

"Maybe that had something to do with it," said Williams, who said she told herself not to get upset with her early errors. "Indoors I think is a little faster."

Pavlyuchenkova, seeking a first career Grand Slam semi-final berth, tried to stem the tide in the sixth game of

the second.

But she couldn't convert three game points as Williams broke to allow herself to serve out the match -- which she finished off with a seventh ace.

Williams next faces either world number one Caroline Wozniacki or 10th-seeded German Andrea Petkovic.

That match was thrown into limbo when the waterlogged Louis Armstrong Stadium court was deemed unplayable because of moisture seeping up through the playing surface behind one baseline.

That meant the Wozniacki-Petkovic would have to be moved, but Williams said a later start time for their contest likely wouldn't affect whoever advanced to the semi-finals.

"Both Wozniacki and Petkovic are super-fit, so I don't think it's going to matter," she said.

Nor was Williams daunted by the prospect of playing three matches in three days should she make it through to the women's final scheduled for Saturday evening.

"Now that I don't get byes any more because my ranking fell, I'm used to playing every day," she said.

Elsewhere in the women's game Samantha Stosur didn't need another marathon to topple world number two Vera Zvonareva, booking her US Open semi-final berth on Thursday with a 6-3, 6-3 victory over last year's runner-up.

NBA star Williams pitches up at Besiktas

ISTANBUL (AFP) - New Jersey Nets playmaker Deron Williams has agreed to play for Turkish side Besiktas until the NBA lock-out is lifted, Turkish press agency Anatolia reported.

"It's the first time that I've come to Istanbul," Williams told reporters upon arriving in the Turkish capital on Thursday.

"I know Turkish basketball a bit. I've known (Utah Jazz's Turkish player) Mehmet Okur for six years. He told me about Turkey, Istanbul, Besiktas and Turkish basketball.

"I hope that I'll have a good time here with all my family. I came because of the lock-out in the NBA. Afterwards I'll go back (to the United States)."

According to American sports channel ESPN, Williams has a clause in his contract enabling him to return to the US as soon as the lock-out is lifted.

The 26-year-old will not be the first NBA star to turn out for Besiktas, as 11-time NBA All-Star Allen Iverson played for them last season.

Besiktas also revealed last month that they are in talks with Los Angeles Lakers' superstar shooting guard Kobe Bryant and are prepared to offer him a salary of \$500,000 a month.

The lock-out, a nationwide strike, was announced on July 1 after the owners of the NBA franchises and their players were unable to reach an agreement over salaries.

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New ESPN deal expands global rights

NEW YORK (AFP) - NFL officials announced Thursday they have agreed to a new eight-year contract extension to keep Monday night games on ESPN through 2021 that expands the networks global and mobile opportunities.

The deal is worth a reported \$1.9 billion a year, or \$15.2 billion over the extension, compared to the current \$1.1 billion annual deal ESPN now has with the most popular American sports league.

ESPN will be able to show Monday night games and its own NFL programming on

mobile telephones and tablets such as the iPad, utilize 3D distribution and show some playoff games in certain international markets.

US Spanish-language telecasts of Monday games were retained as well as the rights to show Monday night games in Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Europe, Brazil, the Middle East and Caribbean.

"They have taken a great brand and made it better," NFL commissioner Roger Goodell said. "They have had unprecedented success with what they've done. We expect to continue to grow that together."

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Roddick in US Open rage, Nadal, Murray in last eight

NEW YORK (AFP) - Defending champion Rafael Nadal and Andy Murray reached the US Open quarter-finals after two days of frustration Thursday while Andy Roddick stormed off court in an angry tirade against officials.

Second seed Nadal saw off Gilles Muller of Luxembourg with a 7-6 (7/1), 6-1, 6-2 victory while fourth seed and 2008 runner-up Murray cruised to a 6-2, 6-3, 6-3 win over US wild card Donald Young.

But it was 2003 champion Roddick who grabbed the headlines when his last-16 clash against David Ferrer of Spain was suspended because of water seeping up through a crack in the surface on Louis Armstrong Court following another night of torrential rain.

After playing just two games of their resumed match, the players were taken off court as groundstaff tried desperately to soak up the water.

When Roddick and Ferrer returned, the 29-year-old American was furious at the conditions. Telling besieged referee Brian Earley that the surface was still too wet to play, he packed his bag and stormed off to jeers from the crowd.

"Why are we here if there is water there?" asked a furious Roddick.

"I'm getting really pissed off. Jesus, what are we doing here. It's killing me. I am baffled right now."

The match was then switched to Court 13 as offi-



Roddick hits a return to Ferrer

cials kept up their bid to clear a huge backlog caused by two days being washed out by rain.

Nadal had trailed 0-3 overnight after just 15 minutes of play had been possible on Wednesday, but with bright sunshine replacing rain, the Spaniard raced into the last eight.

Next up for the champion is either Roddick or Ferrer.

Nadal, whose fourth round match had originally been slated for Tuesday, had led a player revolt on Wednesday, angry at having to go on court when the Arthur Ashe Stadium surface was still damp and with rain still in the air.

He claimed players' safety was being compromised by tournament officials.

"It was a tough day yesterday for the players and the

fans who waited many hours. Sorry about that, but thanks for still being here," said Nadal, who will have to play four days in succession if he is to feature in Sunday's final.

"The situation yesterday was not easy for us and the organisers. They tried their best but they were wrong. Everyone makes mistakes."

Nadal has endured a dramatic US Open, collapsing with cramping at a news conference after his third round win over David Nalbandian before his frustrating two days waiting for the rain to clear.

He made up for lost time on Thursday, taking less than two hours to complete victory over the 68th-ranked Muller who he had also defeated at Wimbledon this year.

Murray, who had joined Nadal in Wednesday's protest, avenged his loss to the 84th-ranked Young at Indian Wells in March to reach the last eight for the first time since he fell in the 2008 final to Roger Federer.

Young had held a 2-1 lead when rain brought proceedings to a halt on Wednesday.

But Murray showed no ill-effects from the repeated delays as the 22-year-old American's bid to become the first wild card to reach the quarters since James Blake in 2005 was doomed by 53 unforced errors.

Murray next faces either 12th-seeded Gilles Simon of France or 28th-seeded American John Isner for a place in the semi-finals.

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Smith in talks for record China deal: report



NEW YORK (AFP) - NBA free agent guard J.R. Smith is near a deal to play the coming season for Shanxi of the Chinese Basketball Association for a Chinese league-record \$3 million, Yahoo Sports reported Thursday.

Citing unnamed sources, the website reported that seven-year NBA standout Smith, who turns 26 on Friday, would lose his chance at unrestricted free agency ahead of the NBA season if he makes the deal to play in China.

Smith, who played for the Denver Nuggets the past five seasons, has averaged 12.5 points, 2.8 rebounds and 2.0 assists a game over his NBA career.

The news comes as NBA players and club owners meet to try and reach a deal to end a lockout by owners that has shut down the league for the first time since 1999 and threatens to wipe out all or part of the season set to open November 1.

The Nuggets have already lost forward Wilson Chandler to China's Zhejiang Guangsha and Smith, like Chandler, would not be able to sign with NBA clubs until they return from China.

Chinese clubs no longer sign NBA players who want opt out clauses to return to North America before the Chinese season ends in March.



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